

MASON BOARD OF EDUCATION
Work Session Meeting
November 9, 2015
Harvey Education Center
400 South Cedar Street
5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

A work session of the Mason Board of Education was held at the James C. Harvey Education Center on Monday, November 9, 2015. The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Ralph Beebe, President.

Present: Ralph Beebe, Becky Brimley, Laura Fenger, Julie Rogers, Kurt Creamer, and Tom Curtis; Lance Delbridge, Susan Disselkoen, Dan McConeghy, Jodi Somerville, Liz Evans, Christopher Mumby, Shelly Fanson, Lisa O'Connor, Chris Waltz, Jon Droscha, Pete Hanover, Cortney Ford; Ted Moore, Moore Trospen Construction Company; Steve Merriman, GMB Architecture and Engineering; Courtney James, The Skillman Corporation; Mike Kenny, The Skillman Corporation

Absent: Laura Cheney

Also Present: Ron Drzewicki, Superintendent; Cheryl S. Wald, Chief Financial Officer; Matt Stuard, Curriculum Director; Rick Brooks, Director of Human Resources

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Julie Rogers made and Tom Curtis supported a motion to approve the agenda as printed. All yes. Motion carried 6-0.

BOND PROPOSAL UPDATE

Chris Waltz addressed the Board of Education and thanked them for the opportunity to meet with the Steering Committee. She stated the purpose of the work session is to answer questions the members may have regarding a bond proposal. Chris shared that the Steering Committee is a dedicated and passionate group.

The bond proposal update agenda was presented and reviewed.

Chris Waltz shared the long term vision of the Steering Committee and gave an overview of how the Steering Committee arrived at a recommendation to build a new 4/5 building. She expressed the reasons the committee decided not to expand the existing, overcrowded elementary buildings.

Steve Merriman added that the Michigan Department of Treasury has a percentage of utilization for teaching stations and student numbers. Districts must have over 85% utilization of a building

in order to build a new building. The middle school and high school are below 85%. The Treasury Department would not approve the building of a new middle school or high school. He stated our elementary buildings were built to hold 405 students each. These buildings currently average 470 students. It is legal to have more than 405 students, but not the intent. Due to these findings, attention was shifted to the elementary level.

Laura Fenger asked about plans to staff a new building with administrative and secretarial support and how it will impact the overall budget. Superintendent Drzewicki shared that the Steering Committee has discussed this. Most staff members are already in place. If elementaries are smaller we may have economy of scale to be allocated to a new building.

Becky Brimley inquired about how many students would be placed in the 4/5 building and the answer was under 500.

A new building would have 112,000 to 118,000 square footage, while our current elementary buildings are approximately 48,000 square feet. A new building would include a gym and separate cafeteria and classrooms sizes would be expanded.

The anticipated cost of the building is unknown at this time due to variables. Estimated cost of a new 4/5 building is 25 to 30 million. The Steering Committee will continue to define this number. Courtney James stated that Treasury will require an amount in the bond application. The group is putting estimates to the sketches and has not completed that level of detail.

Ralph Beebe answered Tom Curtis' question regarding alternatives to a 4/5 building by stating the Steering Committee started with a blank slate. They looked at the current conditions and decided how to solve the issues. Twelve different ideas were discussed and then evaluated. Other ideas considered included a K/1 building, building larger elementaries, and transitioning 5th grade to the middle school. Ralph Beebe stated the ideas were part of the community survey and much time was spent reaching the recommendation to build a 4/5 elementary.

Christopher Mumby reminded the group that a FAQ document has been shared with the Board of Education.

The group discussed grade level building transitions. The Steering Committee agrees and is sensitive to student needs and transitions.

Kurt Creamer shared concerns for students transferring from a brand new building to an existing middle school. Susie Disselkoe responded and stated the bond would provide for upgrades, additional technology and new opportunities for students at the middle school. Dan McConeghy added that the transition from 6th grade to 7th grade is generally tougher than 5th grade to 6th grade. He does not believe it will be a hard transition from a 4/5 building to the middle school because of the preparation and middle school open house.

Christopher Waltz reminded those in attendance that the largest need is at the elementary level. A bond will fix immediate needs, but not all things.

Ralph Beebe said our community will step-up to solve our needs. The question is "what does the district need and what does it want to ensure we have great technology and world class courses in these buildings."

The facility timeline was referenced. The last additions and renovations were completed 18 years ago in 1997.

The committee is supporting a renewal of the Sinking Fund and believes it to be palatable for voters. The group referenced the Sinking Fund Past Uses document. The Sinking Fund will be on the same ballot. The committee agrees that the Sinking Fund is needed even if the bond proposal passes. Superintendent Drzewicki added that communication to the tax payers will be important.

Steve Merriman of GMB Architecture and Engineering shared preliminary sketches of building improvements. A priorities menu will be developed.

The Alaiedon Elementary sketch displayed an added cafeteria, a secure entrance and office placed near the South parking lot. Classrooms would be expanded. In a second design, the current media center would become a 3rd grade wing and the media center would be moved to a central location.

North Aurelius Elementary has an opportunity to attain additional land to move the parent drop off and entry area to the South. An adjustment to bussing and road positioning would bring the building to code. The building would gain a cafeteria and office expansion. Classrooms would be expanded and the portable eliminated.

The sketches for Steele Elementary focused on a two story building. The bus loop and office would be relocated allowing for better flow into the building. A land purchase is being looked at for Steele Elementary. The oldest part of the building would be demolished and the 1997 renovations would remain. Like grades will be placed together and the gym would be relocated. Another option if land is not available would be to move the gym to the backside of the building and move 3rd grade students to the upper level. The building would gain natural lighting and classroom size would increase.

The middle school sketches included upgrades to the traffic flow, the office would be moved to a center access point, and centralization of science labs by breaking down large classrooms. The media center would be renovated with large group instruction nearby. The cafeteria and stage area would be opened up. Locker rooms would be renovated and showers would be condensed to create locker space. There would be a gym and multi-purpose area added. The STEM and Robotics areas would be modified. The technology department would be moved into a space conducive to their needs.

Steve Merriman shared the sketches for the high school. The bond would correct parking and traffic flow, the office and common areas would be relocated and the bus loop would be in the back with staff parking added. The current court yard would be developed to help with building flow. The performance arts area would be flipped to create a waiting area and lobby. The drama and band rooms would be right-sized and the athletic director would be moved to the main office area. There are plans to centrally locate the art and science classes and additional space would be allotted for STEM, Robotics and small engines. Steve shared another sketch without the courtyard utilized.

Ralph Beebe confirmed that the sketches presented were only preliminary. Superintendent Drzewicki added that a price tag for the project would be attached at a later date.

Superintendent Drzewicki shared preliminary ideas on project cost. He shared pro forma financial data from Umbaugh & Associates. The group discussed the estimated millage study.

Ralph Beebe stated the district has taken good care of taxpayer dollars. The Steering Committee will be meeting in the next few weeks and would like feedback from board members.

Kurt Creamer said he would like to know what it will take to build the right project for our district. Julie Rogers asked what the district would get for 80 to 120 million dollars and said more information is needed.

Courtney James replied and indicated the sketches that were shown were closer to the 120 million dollar range. She said if the bond asked for 62 million than the district would have to prioritize without many extras. She asked the group to give thought to prioritization.

Chris Waltz stated the district has a history of doing just enough for the moment and will need to look into the future.

Laura Fenger said she would rather spend more to get it done right the first time.

Superintendent Drzewicki offered to hold another work session for board members when the proposal gets closer. The board thought the recommendations were good and requested additional information.

Ralph Beebe thanked the Board of Education and Steering Committee members for their attendance

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Laura Fenger
Secretary